

April 29, 2004

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our members and affiliates, we urge you to co-sponsor the Samaritan Initiative Act of 2004 (HR 4057), which was introduced by Congressman Rick Renzi (R-AZ) on March 30, 2004. HR 4057 is a critical step in the President's initiative to end chronic homelessness by 2012.

There are an estimated 150,000 – 200,000 persons who experience chronic homelessness, living on our streets and in homeless shelters for years without finding their way into stable housing. Research suggests that, although they represent only about ten percent of the adults who become homeless over the course of a year, they consume a disproportionate amount of emergency resources, particularly in shelters, emergency rooms and hospitals. These are among the most vulnerable people in our society, and among the most challenging and difficult to serve.

Fortunately there is a solution to their homelessness. Supportive housing combines supportive services and permanent housing to offer real solutions to chronic homelessness. Research has demonstrated that supportive housing is a cost-effective solution to chronic homelessness.

With your support of HR 4057, Federal agencies will be authorized to pool their resources so they can work together to provide housing with supportive services for persons experiencing chronic homelessness, which includes many of our nation's service disabled veterans. This coordinated approach is crucial to the success of this initiative. Also, since chronic homelessness impacts all communities, HR 4057 takes geographic distribution into consideration and both urban and rural communities will be considered for funding.

HR 4057 will support promising strategies, integrate the systems of services to improve effectiveness, promote self-sufficiency and recovery, and encourage programs serving chronically homeless persons to promote access to Federal, state and local non-homeless specific programs.

We look forward to working with you to ensure the passage of HR 4057. Together we will be successful in achieving the goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2012.

Thank you for your interest and support.

Sincerely:

The Enterprise Foundation  
National Alliance for the Mentally Ill  
National AIDS Housing Coalition  
National Alliance to End Homelessness  
Corporation for Supportive Housing  
Association for Service Disabled Veterans  
National Coalition for Homeless Veterans